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COMMUNICATIONS

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## Essential Elements of a Crisis Communications Plan

Crisis communication plans vary in complexity, but here are the essential elements every organization should compile in order to be prepared for a crisis.

- List of members of the Crisis Communication Team and complete contact information (including after-hours)
- A clear delegation of responsibilities for each member of the team (including backups)
- Clear protocols and procedures for activating the Crisis Communication Team and approving communications
- Guidelines for working with the media during a crisis, including a clearly defined media policy and designated spokesperson(s) and support
- Lists of critical stakeholders and databases with their contact information and guidelines for outreach
- Pre-established notification system(s) and instructions for activation
- Policies and procedures for the front office staff on how to handle media calls & visits
- Pre-approved messages for crisis scenarios and templates for letters, statements to the media and other communication tools for each scenario
- Guidelines for the use of social media during a crisis, including company policies, authorized responders, preferred sites, accounts and general guidelines for participation, monitoring and responding
- Background information for the media and/or a dark website containing executive bios, fact sheets, maps/directions to facilities, high-resolution photos and logos, Material Safety Data Sheets, etc.
- After-hours contact information for local media. (Crises rarely happen during business hours, and the local media will continue to cover your organization long after CNN leaves.)
- Other useful information, including instructions and passwords for social media platforms and 24/7 contact information for outside resources

**When your organization is threatened, you need a specialist.**

**A crisis management specialist.**